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DEPARTMENT OF NURSING EDUCATION

LAURA R. LOGAN, R.N., DEPARTMENT EDITOR

Collaborators: Blanche Pfefferkorn, R.N., and Grace Watson, R. N.

THE FUTURE OF TEACHING IN SCHOOLS OF NURSING WITHOUT UNIVERSITY RELATIONSHIP

BY HARRIET M. GILLETT, R.N.

The future of training schools for nurses is being determined now by those of us who are in any way connected with the teaching or training of nurses, for the pupils, whose ideals we are helping to shape, will in a few years be the administrators and teachers of schools. These same pupils will teach and shape the ideals of those who are to follow them. We should, therefore, attempt to determine without further delay what is wrong with our system of nursing education and, when the decision has been made, make a nation-wide, enthusiastic effort to bring about its reformation.

Many of our so-called *schools* of nursing are still being conducted in such a way that the service of the nurse to the hospital is the primary consideration, and her education is felt to be of secondary importance. It is this fact which is responsible for the large group of nurses who go out every year to a work for which they are poorly prepared. This condition exists, because the principals of the schools from which these young women graduate know much about nursing the sick, but little or nothing about teaching or school management.

What would any community think of having a man or woman who knew nothing about the principles of education put in charge of one of its public schools? Teaching in schools of nursing will never rise to a high level of efficiency till Boards of Managers refuse to appoint, to the position of "principal," a nurse who has no pedagogical knowledge.

A training school for nurses should be conducted along the same lines that any other school would follow. We must make a study of education and learn to use the principles which experts in this field have found essential; not until we do this shall we be able to conduct anything that can be rightly called a *school*.

If we are to maintain schools in which nurses can be taught accuracy, care, method and the habit of thinking about their work we must have:

1. Trained teachers, both in the classrooms and on the wards,
2. Classrooms, planned and equipped with the same thought and care that characterize classrooms in any other school for higher education,

3. Adequate ward equipment, for the ward is the laboratory where the class work is vitalized,
4. Sufficient clinical experience,
5. Ample time for class work and study,
6. A place for study,
7. Pleasant living conditions.

One has a right to expect all of these things from any school, and any nurse training school, hoping to get the right kind of pupils, will, in the near future, have to provide them.

The hardest part of this programme will be to secure trained teachers. It is out of the question to expect Teachers College and the few other universities which maintain departments of nursing and health, to supply the 1500 or more schools of nursing in this country with trained teachers. We regret this is not possible as there is no doubt these courses are of great value to those who will later teach nurses, but, as it is not possible, we must look for help from some other source.

The schools maintained by the state for the training of teachers already give courses in psychology, pedagogy, science, history and English. These courses would be of value to the nurse who desires to become a training school instructor, and it is quite possible these schools would add courses to suit our needs if they were assured a large enough group of students.

The tuition is free in many of these state schools and the expense of living, when provided by the institution, is at a minimum. One catalogue, that came to my attention, quoted it at \$220 a year, including laundry, and this particular school has unusually attractive living quarters. This expense could be met by the student herself or by her school in the form of a scholarship much more easily than could be the larger one incurred by a year at a university.

Another way in which we could help to train teachers is to allow those students, who show an aptitude for teaching, to continue after graduation as assistants to the instructor. They could, under her supervision, help with the demonstrations and practice work and with all kinds of laboratory work. They should attend the classes in which the teaching of theory is being done. If apt pupils, they will learn much, getting an insight into class management, schedule making and record keeping. They should at the same time be given instruction in the theory and principles of teaching at a nearby university or normal school or, if no such college is at hand, in a class taught by a high school teacher or other person familiar with the subject.

At present we have very few ward supervisors who consider

teaching a part of their duties, or would know how, if they did. To prepare persons for this work will be quite as much a task as the preceding one, but of equal importance, for to every 4 to 5 hours spent by the pupil in the classroom she spends from 52 to 56 hours on the ward. The ward supervisor should be conversant with the methods taught in the classroom and to that end she should either go to the class with the pupils, or classes should be held for the supervisors. The supervisors of the medical ward should go to the medical lectures and the surgical ward supervisor to the lectures on surgery and so on through the list of services. The supervisor should then, as the different cases come in, call the attention of the pupils to the points which have been brought out in class. She should see that each student knows the diagnosis, symptoms, and treatments with results of the various cases in the ward. Under her supervision the students should prepare papers on the interesting cases which come to their attention. With such supervision we shall be better able to connect theory and practice.

These ward supervisors must be chosen with care for the pupils will reflect their attitude and ideals. They must be recruited from our own ranks, and should be selected for the character of their work and their executive ability and should be trained for this kind of work during the latter part of their third year.

To retain the type of women we must have in these positions, the hospital will have to pay more than it has formerly paid its supervisors and it will be obliged to make their hours of duty and their living conditions more attractive. They should rank as teachers and be members of the faculty. The classroom instructor and the ward supervisor must work hand in hand if we are to get the best results from our teaching.

It is essential that the equipment of each ward be such that treatments can be given exactly as they are taught in class, and that the method, and, so far as possible, the place for keeping equipment, be the same on different wards. The pupil, then, as she goes from ward to ward will lose no time trying to find how procedures are done or where equipment is kept.

If we are to have classrooms arranged and equipped with the same consideration of comfort and convenience that is found in other schools, we shall have to do away with many of those now in use in basements and attics and other out of the way places and either rent, buy or build new ones. Several schools in the same community could go into partnership in the maintaining of a school, the direct management being put in the hands of a nurse trained as a teacher, under whom would work one or more paid assistants according to

the size of the school. The superintendents of the various schools would act as a Board of Managers. Such a school would be centrally located as each hospital would house and board its own students. It should have at least one large and one small lecture room, a demonstration room, a dietetics laboratory, a science laboratory, a study, and offices for the instructors.

It is true that many problems would come up and many adjustments would need to be made, but for those schools too small to have a preliminary course this seems the only satisfactory solution of their problems and I believe those schools large enough to exist by themselves would not only find this plan much more economical but of real educational value.

Such a school should be supported in one of three ways: by the hospitals each paying in proportion to the number of students sent; by tuition from the students; or by the community. The last way is the ideal one and it may be done in the dim and distant future.

Many maintain that we appreciate only what we pay for. With this maxim in mind, might we ask the student to pay \$50 each semester, or \$100 each year for the class instruction? This tuition from 100 students would amount to \$10,000 a year which would go a long way toward the support of the school.

If the hospital is relieved of a large part of this responsibility, I see no reason why it would not pay the student for the valuable service she renders. It might pay her nothing during the preliminary period, as she renders so small a service; \$20 a month during the first year; \$30 a month during the second year and \$40 a month the third year. I am aware there are some who will question the wisdom of this procedure, but there are many young women of a fine type in our schools today who are obliged to earn their own tuition just as there are many college women who must. The college student, however, has a long vacation and some free time during the semester in which to do this, while the training school student has so short a vacation and so little free time that remunerative work outside the hospital is out of the question. It would seem only fair, therefore, for the hospital to pay something for a service which consumes so much of the student's time, and which the hospital is loath to do without.

People are beginning to ask if it is not possible to teach nurses to give bedside care in a shorter time than is now being used. The opinion seems to be pretty general that it can be done but only by making the teaching in both classroom and on the wards more intensive. If this plan is adopted, those who have had four years of high school and who possess ability for teaching and supervision,

should be encouraged to stay in the school to take courses which have previously been referred to in this paper. For schools still maintaining the three years' course, students should be encouraged to select teaching and supervision as elective. It will be an added responsibility for the teacher to so enthuse her students with the value of this work that they will consider it an honor to be chosen to do it. If the students who have gone out from our fine large hospitals to take charge of small hospitals had had some instruction and experience in supervision, the requisition and giving out of supplies, housekeeping, record keeping, arranging for class work, etc., we would have fewer poor schools today.

It is because we have failed to select the best pupils and train them for the work of teaching and supervision that our schools have progressed so slowly.

Harry Bradley Smith, the director of industrial education in New York State College for Teachers at Albany, in his book on *Establishing Industrial Schools*, says, "It is the duty of present day education to select and train those who are to create, in order that a new and higher standard may always be presenting itself, and then to afford a mass education that will insure the ability of a great working class to accept and make intelligent use of higher standards. Through this process of the group rising to the new level set by the unequal man has come all kinds of progress."

The school of the future must not only arrange the hours of duty so the pupil will have time to study but it must see that she is taught how to study economically. Alfred Lawrence Hall-Quest has written a very good book on the subject of *Supervised Study*, which will be a help to any teacher struggling with a class that does not know how to prepare its lessons.

It is possible that in the semi-distant future we may shorten the hours of duty from 8 hours to 7 hours, especially if the length of the course is reduced, for with the shortening of the course will come a relatively larger amount of class work, which in turn will call for more study. This seven hours of interested, daily service, properly supervised would mean more to the pupil and to the hospital than ten hours of the poorly supervised service which is characteristic of some of our schools today.

Some one has said, "Education to be effective must be intensive and individual, and it is only by repetition and constant supervision that any advance is made."

In order to supervise or teach with the best interest of the pupil at heart we must have enthusiasm for our work. It is one of the important qualities of a good teacher.

The enthusiasm and interest of the public school teacher is kept keen by coming in contact with others doing the same kind of work. Institutes are held annually where instruction in new methods are given and where round tables for discussion are held. Those young women who have gone out from our schools poorly prepared for their work in hospitals would be greatly benefited by such institutes. The teachers of the country come together every year in the National Educational Association. I have sometimes wondered if it might not be a good plan for the training school principals and instructors to join this organization. We should not only hear the discussions on education which we so much need but our work would then be openly allied with the field of education and so gain prominence among the teachers, who are the vocation guiders of the young women of our country. I believe it would be a very good kind of publicity.

The public school teachers have also learned that they can gain much by visiting schools. In some cities one day each term is set aside as "visiting day." If we could learn to pursue this course it would benefit the visitor and visited. It is considered a fine impetus to good teaching. We cannot afford to neglect it.

Whether we make use of the suggestions presented in this paper or whether we evolve others more efficacious, one thing is certain,—we must do something and we must begin it quickly, or we shall lose the opportunity which is now ours, and unnecessarily defer the day when our schools of nursing will function as schools capable of preparing young women for fields which are today crying loudly for their service.

Two girls were on their way home from a local hospital and were discussing an operation. One of the girls was a recent graduate and the other was expecting to enter training. Naturally the conversation related to hospital life. They had been accompanied by a boy of about ten years of age and they were astonished and greatly amused when he asked, "Miss H., when you saw anyone cut open did you ever see his conscience and what did it look like?"

Dr. —, at the phone: "Please send the ethyl chloride to Ward II."
Timid voice over the wire: "There is no one here by that name, doctor."